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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001214

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2009

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: TENSIONS WITHIN CONGO'S RCD EX-REBEL MOVEMENT

Classified By: Poloff Edward Bestic for Reasons 1.5 B and D

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: There is much frustration within the ex-rebel Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), but members are divided on how best to proceed. There are disagreements over whether to make more versus less concessions to their adversaries, how best to deal with current and future insurgents, and how "Congolese" the party needs to appear. We are more likely to see repeated challenges to Ruberwa's leadership rather than a formal split in the party, however. For now, membership in the RCD and its promise of possible largesse is more attractive than would be membership in some small, inconsequential breakaway group which is not part of the transitional government. END SUMMARY.

Former RCD Leader Criticizes Ruberwa, Rwanda

¶12. (C) Senate 1st Vice-President Dr. Emile Ilunga told poloff June 17 that current RCD-Goma president Azarias Ruberwa is a "prisoner" of Rwanda. (Note: Ilunga and Ruberwa co-chaired over a June 13-16 meeting of senior RCD leaders. Ilunga was RCD president from 1999-2001. End Note.) Kigali also has influence over top RCD officials Jean-Marie Emungu and Moise Nyarugabo. These individuals represent Rwanda and the Banyamulenge community, not the Congo as they should. This has weakened the RCD's political standing. "If the situation continues," he declared, "the population will see us as nothing but subjects of Rwanda, and we will end up with not a single deputy" in parliament. Ilunga said that during the mid-June meeting he and others argued against Ruberwa, who wanted the RCD to quit the transitional government. Currently, several members including himself are working to oust Ruberwa. In their view, it is better to remain within the party and try to change it rather than split off.

¶13. (C) Ilunga explained that when he was RCD president, operating from Goma, Kigali was able to exercise a much tighter grip over the movement. If we were still there and not in Kinshasa, it would be unthinkable to publicly criticize the actions of mutineers Gen. Laurent Nkunda and Col. Jules Mutebusi. While the Rwandans are "our friends, our allies, whose troops fought and died in the Congo," RCD leaders should not be "slaves" or "vassals" of Kigali. Ilunga added that Rwandan support for North Kivu Governor Eugene Serufuli is part of a deliberate strategy of sponsoring multiple proxies rather than a single ally in the Congo.

¶14. (C) Speaking "as a Senator," Ilunga said the transitional government is a failure. President Kabila and all four of his vice-presidents are corrupt and hopelessly incompetent. Meanwhile, most Congolese live in abject poverty, get absolutely nothing from the state, and are seething with frustration. He asked pointedly, "What's more important, saving the country or respecting the Global, Inclusive Accord?" The aborted coup attempt of June 11 shows how weak the government is. MONUC forces can and should take over the Congo, and countries such as Angola, South Africa and Nigeria could then send additional troops to help the Congo get on its feet. Dr. Ilunga said he has already spoken to the British and Angolan ambassadors about this, and asked poloff to deliver this message to the Ambassador.

Senior RCD Military Official Pessimistic

¶16. (C) Army logistics chief Brig. Gen. Malik Kijege, a Tutsi who was until 2003 the RCD-Goma's chief of military operations, told poloff on 29 June he is pessimistic about the transition in general. Many RCD members have left Kinshasa for the east, because they are frustrated with the slow pace of the transition. Some have actually stopped refurbishing homes they have purchased in Kinshasa, and even traded houses with people in Goma who wish to come to the capital. Kijege criticized the anti-Rwandophone rhetoric of figures such as GDRC Vice-President Yerodia Abdoulaye and pastor Theodore Ngoy, and said he thought a repeat of 1998's witch-hunt against Tutsis is certainly possible since "the same people are in charge," but it would not be as systematic because unlike in 1998 there is a significant international presence in Kinshasa. He himself was a battalion commander in Kinshasa at the time, and only narrowly escaped capture.

¶17. (C) Kijege said that some of the officers in the east associated with Gen. Laurent Nkunda had previously been

imprisoned not once but twice by Kabiliste forces, first in 1996-97, then again after the second war began in 1998. The February 2004 arrest of Maj. Kasongo in Bukavu was a harsh reminder of their potential fate. "Laurent and his men are already in the bush," he explained. "They are already excluded. How can you solve the problem by further excluding them?" They have no other choice but to fight. All parties in the Congo have blood on their hands, Kijege asserted, including President Kabila. It is both unfair and unwise to single out a particular group. Commenting on relations with Kigali, he said people should recognize that because of the 1994 genocide, Rwanda thinks and acts "like a wounded animal," and should not be backed into a corner.

18. (C) Kijege was unwilling to venture an opinion of incoming armed forces chief Lt. Gen. Kisempia, but praised outgoing chief Admiral Liwanga Mata for being "above tribal politics," which remains a serious problem. The Katangans, he said, still want to be in control. They care nothing for the rest of the country, however, so the result is "secession at the summit of state." Despite his official position as chief of logistics, Kijege said he has not been part of the weeks-old government effort to send troops to eastern Congo, and knows little about it.

COMMENT

19. (C) Many RCD members are frustrated and feel they have not fared well from the transition, but they are far from unanimous about how best to proceed. Ilunga's and Kijege's views are representative of the two competing schools of thought within the RCD: more versus less concessions to their adversaries, how best to deal with current and future Nkundas, how "Congolese" the party needs to appear. We are more likely to see repeated challenges to Ruberwa's leadership rather than a formal split in the party, however. For now, membership in the RCD and its promise of possible largesse is more attractive than would be membership in some small, inconsequential breakaway group which has no seat at the table. END COMMENT.

HOOKS